

Sunday, July 24, 2022 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

First Reading: Genesis 18:20-32

20 - Then the LORD said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin!"

23-24 - Then Abraham came near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?"

26 - The LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake."

32 - Then (Abraham) said, "Suppose ten are found there." (The Lord) answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it."

God will not act in a way that is contrary to His character. But He is merciful as well as holy – gracious as well as just.

Sometimes God will do what otherwise He would not do if His people pray, and God will not do what otherwise He would do if His people pray.

Exodus 32: 14 – And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

James 5: 16-18 – The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

If Lot, his wife, and their two daughters had each influenced just one person – including Lot's sons-in-law – that would have been eight and Sodom and Gomorrah might have been saved. But they did not each influence even one. They had that little impact upon their community.

How much impact do we as followers of Jesus have on our community, our nation, our world? If God were to spare our community, our nation, and our world, if each of us were to have an influence and impact upon just one, would our community, nation, and world be spared?

Second Reading: Colossians 2:6-19

July 17 - 1:15-28 – Who Jesus is

July 24 – 2:6-19 – What Jesus did

July 31 – 3:1-11 – Therefore how should I respond – how should I live

8-10 - See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

11 - In him you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ.

12 - When you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 - When you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him.

13-14 - He forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

15 - He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

16-18 - Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking.

Gospel: Luke 11:1-13

1 - [Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."

During their three years together Jesus taught His disciples many things. But all the other times were at Jesus' initiative. This is the only time recorded in the Bible when Jesus taught His disciples something that they had asked Him to teach them. They must have realized that there was something special about His prayer life, so they wanted to learn from Him.

If you were going to ask Jesus to teach you one thing, what would it be?

Jesus did not give them some special words that they were to repeat over and over again. Rather He gave them a pattern for prayer - ten principles for powerful prayer. When we pray we are to approach God -

- 1. With a child-like faith – Our Father**
- 2. With reverence – Who art in heaven**
- 3. With respect – Hallowed be your name**
- 4. With devotion – Your kingdom come**
- 5. With humility – Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**
- 6. With thankfulness – Give us this day our daily bread**
- 7. With a willingness to forgive – Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors**
- 8. With awareness – Lead us not into temptation**
- 9. In a spirit of dependence – Deliver us from evil**
- 10. With praise – For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever**

5-6 - Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him."

9 - Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.

11-12 - Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?